affinity with guitar players, thanks in part to the expression the trombone allows him compared to other brass instruments. There aren't too many – if any at all – brass players who could go toe to toe with the likes of Eric Clapton and beat him to a killer lick.

CB: The other guys who play in blues bands, all they get to do is [mimics horn stabs] in harmony. I can do all that on a trombone. The thing is, what I want to do with a trombone is play the blues on it, you see, which I enjoy doing, but nobody ever expects it.

I did a charity thing with Eric. We were doing *Stormy Monday*. It was in G or something. So, he sang the first phrase and I played, then he played the same thing on the guitar as I did on the trombone! I played the one lick that fits there, what the guitarist would play.

MT: I don't know the technicalities…

CB: Well, it's more about what it sounds like. You can bend the notes on a trombone. You can't do that on some other instruments.

MT: I heard that when Ronnie Wood heard you play at the 100 Club he thought you sounded like Muddy Waters with a trombone.

CB: I must thank him for that one day! That's a great compliment. Very nice.

Mick Taylor says his farewells and hangs up. Chris is now completely fired up and continues reeling off tales of a life spent in the company of fellow legends. We've been distracted by the conversation. There's been a breach in security; there are doggy teeth marks in the sandwiches. While this is all unfolding, SDP grabs a piece of paper and a pen and tries to create a makeshift family tree of British blues with his friend Chris represented as the roots. He wants to make sense of the whole thing. It doesn't take him long to get tangled up in the branches.

Stephen kicks off his sketch with late skiffle poster boy Lonnie Donegan. The 'cheeky chappie', as Chris describes him, was a member of the Chris Barber Jazz Band in the 50s. His profile in the group led to his massive skiffle take on the Lead Belly song *Rock Island Line*, a recording that inspired pimply youth across Britain to commandeer tea chests and washboards and pester their parents for cheap acoustic guitars. The record's legend was chiselled in rock for all time thanks to the influence it had on one rebellious teenager in learning his craft in Liverpool.

"It's famous that John Lennon was in a skiffle band (The Quarrymen – Ed)," says Petit. "Then there's Jimmy Page playing skiffle on some BBC show as a kid. You've got you encouraging Alexis Korner and Cyril Davies who were in your band. You've got John Mayall coming through with encouragement from Alexis. Free coming from Alexis; Robert Plant was with Alexis too. I'm already losing the thread!"

The implication, of course, is that trying to measure Chris' influence on his fellow Brit blues junkies and popular music in